

Tour Information

Open to the public Monday—Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Guided tours available: 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.; 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 p.m. Other hours can be scheduled for groups. Reservations (404)656-2844 or www.sos.state.ga.us.

The Capitol is located in downtown Atlanta at the intersection of I-20 and I-75/85, near Five Points and Georgia State MARTA stations.

Distributed by the Office of Secretary of State Karen C. Handel

Welcome
to the
Georgia State Capitol



Sonny Perdue
Governor



Casey Cagle
Lt. Governor



Glenn Richardson
Speaker of the House



women who have made significant contributions to our state’s history.

Welcome to the Georgia State Capitol! Whether you are a Georgia resident or a visitor to our great state, I hope you will take the opportunity to explore this historic building and learn more about the men and

This building has served as Georgia’s State Capitol since its completion in 1889. In 1994, a major renovation and restoration initiative was launched. These efforts continue today, so that we can preserve our Capitol’s historical significance, while also ensuring that it provides an efficient working environment.

Georgia’s State Capitol has been the center of political activity for over a century. Georgia history quite literally was made – and continues to be made – in these very halls. Stop by the Visitors Desk on the 2nd floor to join a formal tour of the Capitol. Or, head out on your own. The Hall of Valor on the 1st floor presents a stunning exhibit of historic battle flags. From the 3rd floor, view the House and Senate Chambers of our General Assembly and catch democracy in action. As you make your way to the 4th floor, stop by the Capitol Museum where you can learn about key historical events. And, throughout the Capitol, you’ll see Georgia’s history revealed in art and statuary.

On behalf of our Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker of the House, thank you for visiting Georgia’s State Capitol!

Sincerely,

Karen C Handel

Karen C. Handel
Secretary of State

History

Atlanta is the fifth permanent capital city of Georgia. Savannah, site of James Edward Oglethorpe’s landing in February 1733, was Georgia’s first capital. After the Revolutionary War, the General Assembly met alternately in Savannah and Augusta. As development continued westward, the capital moved to Augusta in 1786, to Louisville in 1796, to Milledgeville in 1807, and finally to Atlanta in 1868.

The General Assembly first convened in the Atlanta City Hall/Fulton County Courthouse and shortly afterwards moved to the Kimball Opera House. One million dollars was appropriated for the new Capitol in 1883. The classical design building by the Chicago architectural firm Willoughby J. Edbrooke and Franklin P. Burnham was constructed by Miles and Horne of Toledo, Ohio. Construction began in October 1884, and the building was completed under budget in 1889, returning \$118.43 to the state treasury. Governor John B. Gordon dedicated the new Capitol on July 4, 1889, to “the indomitable will of the people.”



© Kenan Research Center / Atlanta History Center

The Capitol was built with as many Georgia products as possible, including wood and iron ore. The huge expense of quarrying Georgia marble made it impractical to use marble on the exterior, although Georgia marble was used for the interior finish of walls, floors, and steps, as well as the cornerstone. The Board of Capitol Commissioners, charged to oversee the design and construction of the building, chose Indiana oolitic limestone as the chief building material.

During National Historic Preservation Week in 1977, the Capitol was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark. National Park Service of the Department of Interior cited the Capitol as an outstanding structure both architecturally and historically.

Architecture

Exterior

The façade features a four-story portico with stone pediment, supported by six Corinthian columns set on large stone piers. The open rotunda extends from the second floor through the upper stories to the height of 237 feet, 4 inches. A dome measuring 75 feet in diameter sits above the crossing. Forty-three ounces of native gold, donated by the citizens of Dahlonge and Lumpkin County, Georgia, were applied to the Capitol dome in 1958-59. In 1981, gilders placed a fresh application of gold on the dome, necessitated by deterioration of the original gold leafing. In recent years, a third coating of gold leaf was completed.



© Diane Kirkland

A female figure of Freedom, with raised torch in her right hand and lowered sword in her left, crowns the Capitol dome. Symbolically, the copper clad statue commemorates the war dead.

She stands 22 ½ feet tall and weighs 1250 pounds.

Interior

The Capitol’s interior reflects the high Victorian style of its day. Inside and around the rotunda on the main floor are marble busts of members of the Georgia Hall of Fame. Large portraits mounted on the rotunda walls once hung in the Milledgeville capitol.



© Jonathan Hillyer

Portraits of former governors hang on the surrounding walls, as does the portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. honors Georgia’s first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. The Governor occupies an executive office on the main floor (second) as does the Lieutenant Governor and Secretary of State. In the atria to the north and south, grand stairs rise to the third floor.

The legislative chambers are located on the third floor—the House of Representatives to the west with 180 members and the Senate to the east with 56 members, all elected for two-year terms. These elected officials serve 40 days each year, beginning in January. The General Assembly deliberates, votes, and sends bills to the Governor for final action.



© Jonathan Hillyer

The Supreme Court and Court of Appeals met in the Capitol until 1956, when the Judicial Building was completed. Today, the Appropriations Committee meets in this room.



© Jonathan Hillyer

Museum

In 1895, the Governor declared the top floor of the Capitol as a temporary museum to exhibit rocks and minerals illustrating the diversity of the state’s rich natural resources. Today, the exhibits in the Capitol Museum showcase the story of the building and events that have shaped its history.

On the first floor, historic battle flags rotate on exhibit in the Hall of Valor, each presenting its own story of war and patriotism.



© Textile Preservation Associates, Inc.

These service flags bear witness to the commitment of Georgians who answered the call to arms, and when necessary, sacrificed their lives.

Preservation

The Georgia General Assembly in 1993 established the Commission for the Preservation of the Georgia State Capitol to oversee the restoration of the building. Since that time, the Capitol has experienced several phases of restoration, returning to original paint colors, Victorian period lighting, and fine wood finishes.

The rehabilitation and renovation continue as the Capitol is transformed to its original classical elegance.



© Jonathan Hillyer

Public Forum

Citizens gather at the Capitol to celebrate, mourn, and express their views. Georgians of all ages and from all walks of life come together for the Veterans’ Memorial Day Ceremony, the annual tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., the Holocaust Days of Remembrance, and countless other events. The Governor addresses a group assembled for the National Day of Prayer.



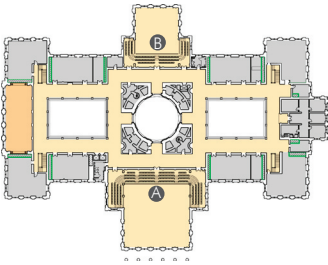
© Kelli Musselman

Grounds



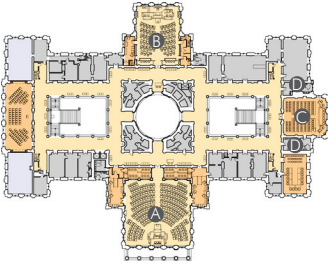
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The statue of John Brown Gordon sculpted by Solon Borglum was the first monument to be placed on the Capitol grounds in 1907. Since that time, other governors have been memorialized on Capitol Hill, including Joseph E. Brown, Richard B. Russell, Jr., Eugene Talmadge, Herman Talmadge, Jimmy Carter, and most recently, Ellis Arnall.



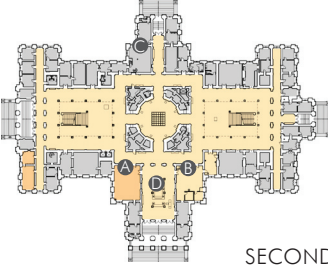
- Ⓐ House Gallery
- Ⓑ Senate Gallery
- Ⓒ Capitol Museum (Corridors)

FOURTH FLOOR



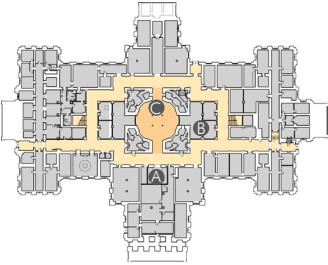
- Ⓐ House Chamber
- Ⓑ Senate Chamber
- Ⓒ Appropriations Room (Room 341)
- Ⓓ Restrooms

THIRD FLOOR



- Ⓐ Office of the Governor (Room 203)
- Ⓑ Office of the Secretary of State (Room 214)
- Ⓒ Office of the Lieutenant Governor (Room 240)
- Ⓓ Tour Desk

SECOND FLOOR



- Ⓐ Hall of Valor
- Ⓑ Snack Bar
- Ⓒ Restrooms

FIRST FLOOR